



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

UNFORSEEN TENDENCIES OF DEMOCRACY. By E. L. Godkin. Second Impression. Westminster: A. Constable & Co. Small octavo. Pp. vii, 265.

Of all the publicists who have reflected on contemporary Democracy, Mr. Godkin was perhaps the most informed, as he was certainly the most moderate. He neither holds with the optimist that there are short cuts to political happiness, nor with the pessimist that democracy is unteachable. "Experience counts with it for less than it used to count for under the old aristocratic governments;" but its own experience will in the end be its schoolmaster. The main purpose of these Essays, however, is not so much to describe democracy as to "describe some of the departures it has made from the ways which its earlier promoters expected it to follow." But as Mill suggested in the case of de Tocqueville, Mr. Godkin is perhaps too much inclined to attribute to the effects of democracy what are really the effects of civilization, and this in spite of his own caution against "giving only one cause for political effects." The "uniform failure to predict what democracy will say, or do, or think, under certain given circumstances," he says in one place, is "owing largely to the enormously increased number of influences under which all men act in the modern world;" and among these influences he assigns a first place to the "enormously increased facility for money-making which the modern world has supplied, and the inevitably resulting corruption." But that phenomenon, as Mr. Godkin admits, is not peculiar to a democracy. What, then, are we to understand by a "deduction" from Democracy? The answer to this question must depend upon the way in which we conceive the fundamental idea of Democracy. Mr. Godkin represents it simply as "the principle of equality;" but equality may be very differently understood. However understood, many of "the democratic tendencies" described by Mr. Godkin seem in no way deductions from, or consequences of, "the principle of equality." He himself dwells not only on the different conceptions of democracy in ancient and modern times, but also on the differences between American democracy on the one hand and Australian democracy on the other. In the latter case the main differences are to be found in two facts peculiar to Australia—"the adoption of the cabinet system from England, and the absence of a constitution containing restraints on legislation." Mr. Godkin's book would have been more correctly described as an inquiry into

the unforeseen tendencies, not of democracy, but of democracies: it is in effect a concrete description of some of the difficulties which democratic governments—that is, governments in which the whole community participates in the work of government—have under different conditions actually encountered, difficulties that are only partly inherent in the nature of democratic government as such.

Following out this line of inquiry, Mr. Godkin gives special prominence to the fact that “democracies have not shown that desire to employ leading men in the management of affairs which they were expected to show.” In other words, democracies have not as yet solved the problem of combining administrative efficiency with popular control. This, of course, is not so much a reflection on democracy itself as upon the force and degree of political intelligence in a given democracy. But some evidence at least could be produced to show that “the wish of the people to control their own business” does, in proportion as it is a real and effective will, develop at the same time the recognition of the need of knowledge and the value of the expert. There is certainly nothing in the essence of Democracy which suggests either that one man knows as much as any other, or that government is any the less a science because it is controlled by the community as a whole.

“The disregard of special fitness, combined with unwillingness to acknowledge that there can be anything special about any man, which is born of equality, constitutes the great defect of modern democracy;” but this is not a characteristic of democracy, as such; it is not a logical consequence of its principle or idea, and the remedy for it is not less, but more, democracy. All that Mr. Godkin’s studies tend to demonstrate is that democratic government is difficult; and it is difficult because, more than any other form of government, it depends upon ideas—makes a greater demand upon morality and intelligence. It is not, therefore, surprising that modern democracy has not as yet proved equal to its responsibilities: it means that the democratic idea is incompletely realized—that the collective intelligence is imperfectly developed or organized. As Mr. Godkin himself indicates, democracy is groping its way, and is by no means at the end of its resources or expedients: his criticisms, indeed, proceed on the assumption that there is a demand for a more excellent way; but the demand is only half-hearted. “The demand for good and enlightened government is as great as ever; but the desire for simple government, which can be carried on without drawing largely on the time and attention of the private citizen, is greater than ever.”

"The refusal of respectable citizens to take part in the primaries"—i. e., the "primary" meetings for the selection of candidates for office—to which most American writers ascribe the failures of American politics, is due, in Mr. Godkin's opinion, to "the increased industrial activity and complexity of private affairs"—to the importance which "private affairs have assumed as compared with public affairs." Mr. Godkin traces to this desire for economy of attention the familiar phenomena of "the nominating system," which he describes as "the great canker of American institutions." He is skeptical, however, of any "remedies" other than the great remedy which has been "one of the democratic characteristics"—the "popular determination" to find some better way. In other words, the cure for the evils of modern democracy is not less, but more, democracy.

The studies on "The Decline of Legislatures" and "The Peculiarities of American Municipal Government" are excellent examples of thoughtful and refined observation. Mr. Godkin suggests that the representative system, having been used for a century and found wanting, is likely to "make way in its turn for the more direct action of the people on the most important questions of government, and a much diminished demand for all legislation whatever." The last point is connected with Mr. Godkin's extreme skepticism, not only as to the value, but as to the necessity, of legislation in modern states. Necessary legislation is a rare thing: "the communities in our day seldom need a new law." This is a generalization that seems to have no wider or better foundation than American experience of State legislation. Mr. Godkin's observations on the history and condition of municipalities in America are still more restricted in their scope, though they are interesting enough.

The essay on the growth and expression of Public Opinion seems to us by far the most interesting and suggestive. It is full of admirable reflections, not only on the difficulty of "consulting a modern democracy," but also, and more particularly, on the position and influence of the modern press. Here Mr. Godkin speaks with special authority and instructiveness. On the other hand, the essay on Australian Democracy is admittedly "nothing more than a set of impressions formed from books"—and not always the best books; it also betrays, rather more than the other essays, the limit and the prejudices of the literary politician. His conception of socialism being that it is "essentially a form of domination over the whole individual by the constituted authorities, without consulting

him," it is not surprising that Mr. Godkin should regard it as merely the antithesis to "competition," or as a system devised for "the sinking of superiority" and the suppression of individuality.

Mr. Godkin's political essays are a good example of the best periodical literature of the time, but they have also the defects of their qualities—much of the observation is instructive, but it is also somewhat limited, and never goes particularly deep.

SYDNEY BALL.

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND. By Josef Redlich. Edited with additions by Francis W. Hirst. 2 vols. Pp. xxvi, 427, and viii, 435. London: Macmillan & Co.

Almost all the best accounts of existing social conditions in England have been produced in Germany. One reason is, no doubt, that England is unique both as the field in which modern industrialism first appeared and as a country whose cumulative social experience is unequalled. To study coral islands the naturalist goes to the Pacific; to study industrialism the foreigner has found it necessary to come to England, for a short time, at least. Another reason, however, for the number of German studies of British institutions and conditions is unquestionably the realistic trend of German economic and political thought, and its greater volume. But, whatever the explanation, the fact is undoubted. The only exhaustive study of the social changes which took place at the time of the industrial revolution is Adolf Held's,—Toynbee's essay is wider in scope and slighter in the social side, besides being unfinished,—the book most used in teaching the history and principles of the English Poor Law is Aschrott's; and there are the well-known works of Brentano, Schulze-Gaevernitz and Von Plener on Guilds and Trade Unions, Social and Industrial matters and Factory Legislation; some of which, however, it is satisfactory to remember, are now being supplemented by even more thorough English studies.

And now another work has just appeared in Austria—a detailed, exact and thoughtful work—on the subject of Local Government in England, by Josef Redlich, of the Faculty of Law and Political Science in the University of Vienna. Mr. F. W. Hirst has done the good service of translating it, or, rather, rendering it,